

10 NON-RESIDENTIAL APPLICATIONS OF LEAD-SAFE YARD MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Many of the mitigation strategies and approaches incorporated into a lead-safe yard program can be applied to non-residential properties as well. Properties such as tot lots, playgrounds, community gardens, and vacant lots where children play may contain high levels of lead in their soil. Also, while children should not be playing at abandoned industrial sites or commercial buildings, these properties can be sources of increased exposure if children have access to areas of lead-contaminated soil. Specific mitigation approaches that have proven successful in reducing lead exposure risk at residential properties can be just as effective when applied to certain non-residential properties.

At tot lots and playgrounds, for instance, raised sand boxes can be constructed. The bottoms of these boxes should be lined with perforated plastic, landscaping fabric, or even indoor-outdoor carpeting to create a barrier between the lead-contaminated soil and the clean sand in which the children play. Clean sand should be tested to ensure that it does not contain lead levels of concern (i.e., greater than 400 parts per million). Similar raised boxes can be built around playground equipment and play areas and filled with sand, gravel, or mulch. Another alternative is to lay down rubber matting in play areas, or even paving lots. Planting and maintaining healthy grass cover is yet another option for play areas. Planting evergreen shrubs in areas with especially high lead levels can also be effective in keeping children from playing in these areas.

Community gardens can also incorporate lead-safe yard principles to protect against lead exposure. Raised garden boxes can be constructed, lined with perforated plastic or landscaping fabric, and filled with clean loam and compost. Loam should be tested to ensure that it does not contain lead above the 400-ppm level. Clean compost should be added yearly to replenish nutrients and help control lead levels.

Vacant lots where children play can be made lead-safe by covering exposed areas of soil. Planting grass is one approach, but other materials such as woodchips, mulch, or even gravel could be used. To keep children from playing in areas with high levels of lead in the soil, plant evergreen bushes and shrubs.

For abandoned industrial sites and commercial buildings, construct barriers (such as fences or walls) to keep children out of these potentially dangerous areas.